

University of Dundee

Citizen Science Projects (MOOC) 4.11

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Video type: Talking head

Speaker: Uta Wehn

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Script	Visuals
[Music]	FutureLearn opening animation
[Music]	WeObserve logo University of Dundee logo
UTA WEHN: As a citizen scientist, you will want to examine the impact of changes resulting from your work for many reasons. For one thing, it will give you insight on whether you're citizen science activities have been worthwhile and how they contribute to science policy and management. But you will also want to capture this for the sake of others. You can share your experiences and help others to learn about the potential of citizen science so that they can follow in your footsteps. When you capture impacts, you make your initiative visible, and you can highlight the effects made by all the citizen scientists involved in your activities.	
Finally, it also helps to demonstrate the value of citizen science to policymakers, funders, and others who may still be sceptical about citizen science. Most importantly, attention to the impacts of your Citizen Science Initiative should not be the last but one of the first things you do. But how can you actually examine the impact and changes resulting from your citizen science activities? WeObserve has set up a community of practice that is dedicated to this topic. It brings together researchers and citizen science practitioners who exchange experiences on how they capture the impact of their activities, particularly the impacts on policy and governance. This group has found that different ways of capturing impacts are useful for different purposes.	
You can use comprehensive impact assessment frameworks, for example, because they are of interest to researchers and scientists who study citizen science. But they require a lot	

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<p>of experience, time, and resources to apply. Another simpler approach is called impact stories. You can use impact stories to report on changes that result from citizen science. An impact story is a narrative about your journey for when you started the Citizen Science Initiative. In your story, you will explain the issue you were trying to tackle. And you talk about moments or events when you were aware of a change that had occurred in relation to the problem you were working on.</p>	
<p>You can use an impact story to report on a moment or event when you felt empowered in a discussion with authorities because you had gathered data and insights through your work as a citizen scientist. For example, in the Ground Truth Citizen Observatory Meet Mee Mechelen in Belgium, they collected data about air quality in different neighbourhoods in the city of Mechelen. The results of the measuring campaigns were presented at a public event where the parents, schoolteachers, policymakers, and researchers were involved in discussions. At the event, all of them realised that actions and behaviour change were needed by each and every one of them in their respective roles.</p>	
<p>This realisation by various stakeholders is an intermediate step in the longer impact journey of this initiative. So the impact story approach was a useful way to capture and report on this. The WeObserve impact community of practice has developed a template to help you capture the impacts and changes resulting from your citizen science activities. This is available on the WeObserve website. The relevant new development is the MICS platform, which is developing ways in which citizen scientists can easily report and monitor the impacts of the Citizen Science Initiative from the start and over</p>	

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time.	
<p>To sum up, examining the impacts and changes resulting from your work as a citizen scientist is important for several reasons and can be done in a number of ways. Impact stories are one of the emerging ways in which this can be done with relatively little effort. Other ways and tools for capturing the impacts of citizen science are fast emerging. And attention to the impacts of your Citizen Science initiative should not be the last but one of the first things you do. If you're interested in learning more about the existing and new ways of examining the impacts of citizen science, why not join the WeObserve communities of practice? You can sign up using the link below.</p>	
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